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County Manager's Office

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Russell Leeds, Assistant County Manager

November 28, 2022

To: Chair Baumgardner, Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight

Re: Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections Systems Standards

From: Russell Leeds, Assistant County Manager, Sedgwick County

Committee Chair Baumgardner and members of the joint committee, my name is Rusty Leeds and I am here to provide an overview of the work done and the recommendations set forth by the Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections Systems Standards.

The Community Taskforce was established to review and recommend preferred system improvements after the arrest of Cedric Lofton on September 24, 2021 and his subsequent death on September 26, 2021. The Taskforce has twenty-two members representing a diverse range of backgrounds, interests and community perspectives, to include but not limited to child welfare, foster care, civil rights, social justice, education, culture, mental health, faith-based services, juvenile justice, and youth development.

The goal of the Taskforce was to develop recommendations for improvements and changes to the existing system standards and the performance of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), law enforcement, and youth corrections programs. The first meeting of the Taskforce was on February 3, 2022.

The Work of the Taskforce was to:

- Review the circumstances and details of the Cedric Lofton case, relative to existing system standards and performance.
- Review law enforcement and foster care policies, and review mental and behavior health training and resources.
- Review Juvenile Intake and Assessment System (JIAS/State) and Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC/County) standards and use of force.

Representatives from the Department of Children and Families, DCCCA, St. Francis Ministries, Kansas Department of Corrections, Sedgwick County Department of Corrections, COMCARE, Beacon Health Options, Ascension Via Christi, Wichita Police Department, Sedgwick County Emergency Communications (911), and the District Attorney for the 18th Judicial District appeared before the Taskforce to provide information and answer questions to aid the work of the Taskforce.

After 13 meeting sessions from February 2 – April 25, the Taskforce gave final approval on recommendations developed by the Taskforce on April 25, 2022. The Taskforce set forth fifty-eight (58)

recommendations for system changes and improvements. The classifications and counts for recommendations are:

- Foster Care (14)
- Sedgwick County 911 Emergency Communications (5)
- Wichita Police Department (14)
- Youth Corrections (25)

The Taskforce's final Recommendations Report was published on April 26, 2022.

The Taskforce met again on August 29, 2022 for the 90-day progress update. The Taskforce is scheduled to meet again December 6, 2022 for the 180-day progress update.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, all materials related to the work of the Taskforce is published on the Sedgwick County web site on the Community Taskforce page. Additionally, a dashboard was developed and published which provides the real time status of each recommendation and supplemental information on recommendations which are designated as Implemented, or In-Progress.

Status to date:

- 26 recommendations have been implemented
- 26 recommendations are in-progress, actively being worked
- 6 are pending

Sedgwick County is committed to addressing all recommendations within its purview, and working continually with system partners on constructive system changes. The Wichita Police Department and the City of Wichita have been continuously engaged since the beginning of the Taskforce's work.

While we want to ensure members of the Joint Committee have the opportunity to review all recommendations, we want to emphasize those recommendations which are specific to the Legislature, and those that are applicable to State of Kansas Departments.

Legislative recommendations from the Taskforce are:

1. Supporting the passage of HB 2468 and HB 2469 (*2022 session*), which establishes the foster youth and foster parent bill of rights and requires distribution to each foster youth and foster family; ask Sedgwick County to add HB 2468 and HB 2469 to its 2023 Legislative Agenda. (p.5, item 9)
2. Supporting the enactment of SB 12 (*2022 session*), which requires DCF to develop an implementation plan for a set of performance-based contracts to provide an array of evidence-based prevention and early intervention services. (p. 5, item 12)
3. Requesting a Legislative post-audit be conducted to examine the implications of the "Stand Your Ground" laws, particularly as it relates to incidents involving law enforcement. (p. 10, item 6)

The Secretaries of DCF and KDOC and their designated staff members have been continuously engaged since the beginning of the Taskforce's work.

Recommendations being managed primarily by the Department of Children and Families are located on pages 4 and 5 of the Recommendations Report under the heading of Foster Care.

Recommendations being managed primarily by the Kansas Department of Corrections are located on page 10 (item 4 Restorative Justice System) and page 11 (item 12 Crossover Youth Practice model) of the Recommendations Report under the heading of Youth Corrections.

Respectfully,

RLL